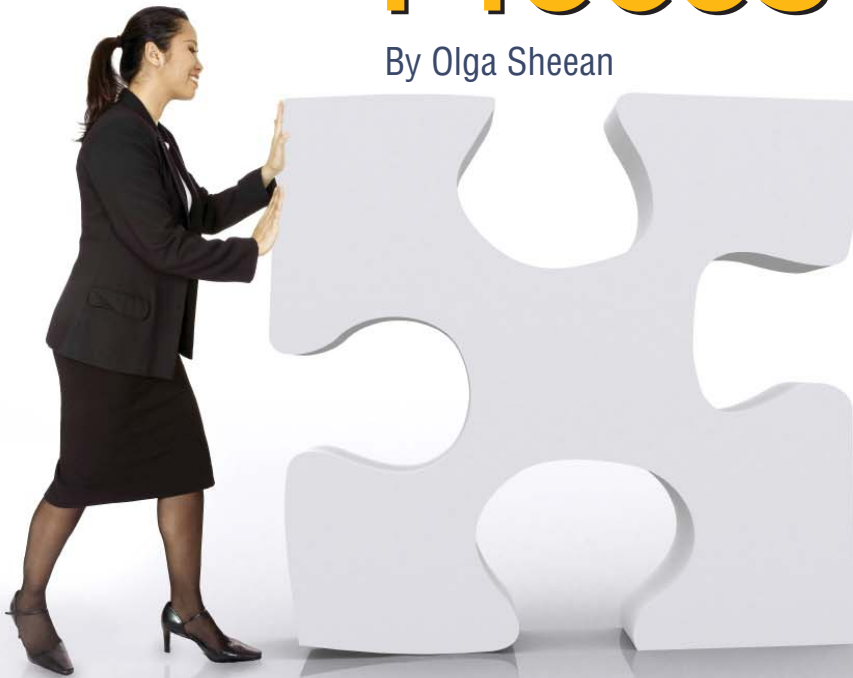


# Pieces of You

By Olga Sheean



**It's often been said that our partners perfectly mirror what is missing within us — for better or for worse. Identifying and filling in these missing pieces is the key to finding the life and love you want, says relationship expert and author Olga Sheean. Interested in solving your love puzzle? Here's how.**

**FEELING** mellow after a fast game of squash, I browsed the notice board as I waited for my partner to change. A middle-aged man was looking at a flyer for a singles club. "Interesting stuff," I said, following his gaze. "Nah," he said, dismissing it with a wave of his hand. "That stuff never works. I had 22 years of marriage and it brought me nothing but heartache. You won't catch me doing that again in a hurry."

Sadly, he's not the only one to feel that way. When relationships fail, many of us give up on them altogether. Too

much rejection, pain, and disappointment causes us to lose faith in our ability to create the love we want — or even to believe in its existence. After all, finding the right partner can be a real hit-and-miss affair. Even if you know what you're looking for, and do all the right things (such as going to the gym, bars, social clubs, or going online), it's all a matter of luck.

Right?

Well, actually, no. There is nothing random or accidental about relationships,

and no relationship is ever a mistake. The only reason they appear to be any of these things is because they are the result of what is going on inside your subconscious (rather than your conscious) mind. That is where all the match-making really takes place. When you understand how that works, you can transform the way you live and love.

The subconscious has its own secret agenda and it can wreak havoc in your relationships unless you understand how it operates. It contains an arsenal of negative beliefs, fears, and insecurities that you absorbed from your parents when you were growing up. These beliefs shape the way you view the world and the way you relate to yourself and others. If you grew up in an environment of neglect, abuse, or criticism, for example, you would subconsciously come to think of yourself as worthless, unacceptable, or simply not good enough — creating absolute, bottom-line beliefs about your level of worthiness or lovability in the world. And how worthy or lovable you subconsciously believe yourself to be, as a result, determines the kind of love and life that you attract. You don't need dating agencies to find the perfect partner; you just need to figure out your negative programming and then positively transform it so it brings you what you want.

Once you realize that your subconscious has been calling the shots all along, behind your back, everything starts to make sense. You understand why you've been attracting particular kinds of partners, and life becomes a whole new ballgame.

## Changing the rules of the game

The partners you end up with —

seemingly by chance or circumstance — are in your life so that you can heal the parts of yourself that were distorted by your early programming. Like a powerful magnet, your subconscious brings you the perfect partner for mirroring and triggering your deepest issues so that you can (with sufficient self-awareness) address them, resolve them, and move on to what you ultimately want.

But unless you know how to decode your negative programming, you may never master your relationships or your life. Instead, a failed relationship may simply bring heartache — as it did for the man at the squash club — rather than bringing you the breakthrough in self-discovery and healing that it has the potential to create. Identifying your subconscious programming can be a slippery process, since it is beyond your awareness. Transforming it can be daunting, too, because it means challenging some of the limiting beliefs that have shaped your life.

A key part of this process involves identifying what I call your "missing pieces." As children, we need certain formative qualities, such as acceptance, respect, trust, honesty, encouragement and support, in order to feel complete and good about ourselves. When these qualities are nurtured in us by our parents, we develop a strong sense of identity and purpose in the world; we feel safe expressing ourselves and our creativity, and we are programmed to thrive. But if our parents missed out on these qualities in their own upbringing, they will be unable to pass them on to us. And so these "missing pieces" get handed down from generation to generation, unless someone knows how to break the cycle.

Our missing pieces have a powerful impact on our lives. They cause us to distort, hide, or diminish parts of ourselves, affecting the choices we make, our willingness or ability to take risks, and the degree of success, fulfillment, and happiness we experience in life. They also cause us to attract partners

with the same missing pieces as us, creating cycles of neediness or co-dependence. Our partners are perfect mirrors for what is missing within us. But unless we understand this, our relationships will be fraught with conflict, with each partner desperately trying to get from the other what they are both missing.

Emma, for example, grew up with a great deal of emotional abuse in her family. For her, respect and acceptance were important "missing pieces," leaving her emotionally insecure and lacking in self-worth. As a result, she consistently attracted partners for whom she was never good enough who failed to treat her with respect. What Emma failed to realize was that these partners presented the perfect opportunity for her to practice standing her ground and enhancing her self-worth, precisely because they didn't give her the acceptance she craved. She needed to practice acceptance for herself, in the face of rejection, so that it became a natural part of her. Only then would she be emotionally equipped to be herself, to deal with the world on her terms — and to move on to something better.

## Filling in your missing pieces

Identifying and filling in your missing pieces is the key to having the life and the love that you want. In fact, if anything is not working in your life, it is almost certainly because of your missing pieces and the negative beliefs associated with them. The more you fill them in, the more complete you will be and the more you will experience these same qualities in your relationships and in your life.

To identify your missing pieces, ask yourself what qualities have been missing for you in your relationships (*see box*). They may include acceptance, support, trust, honesty, intimacy, or any other form of human interaction that is an expression of love. When you figure out what has been missing (even if it looks as if it's your partner's "fault"), you will have identified your own missing pieces.

The next step is to identify how you have been perpetuating your missing pieces yourself. If acceptance is a missing piece, for example, ask yourself if you have been putting others' needs first, if you have been making compromises or choices that don't feel good, if you have been holding back a part of yourself from your partner or friends, or if you have been putting yourself down, deflecting compliments, or not allowing others to give to you or rejecting yourself in some way. All these behaviors demonstrate a lack of self-acceptance, perpetuating a pattern of self-rejection

that is guaranteed to bring you precisely what you don't want.

Filling in your missing pieces means doing the opposite of what you have been doing all along. It means putting yourself first in healthy ways, making choices that feel right to you, saying no to whatever doesn't work for you, daring to express yourself even if others might disagree or be upset with you, and generally being yourself as much as you possibly can so that you become more complete as a person. It is all about how you feel about you, rather than what others think.

Whatever you subconsciously consider yourself to be worthy of receiving is what you will get. Enhancing your internal self-worth, then, automatically enhances the quality of your relationships.

## The positive power of pain

But what if you're feeling angry, resentful, or stuck in a cycle of pain — like the guy at the squash club? Processing these feelings requires giving yourself what you have been missing (and trying to get from your partners) all along. Whether it's triggered by divorce, the loss of a child, a partner's infidelity, conflict or abuse, pain has a purpose. It is designed to take you somewhere very specific within yourself.

Pain is lovelessness that wants to be healed. Its roots lie in early childhood, when you came to the conclusion that you were unlovable or unacceptable in some way, as a result of your programming. As children, we cannot process this pain and must find ways to cope with not getting the love we needed. We push the pain deep down inside, where it remains until a similar dynamic of rejection, neglect, or abuse triggers it and brings it to the surface. The more unlovable we feel, the greater the pain and the more we will subconsciously try to keep it buried. But our subconscious will ultimately attract whatever it takes to break open our hearts so that the pain can stay buried no longer. For if we do not heal the pain, we cannot have the love, since the pain itself is caused by the subconscious belief that we are unlovable.

Healing the pain requires giving yourself the love you never got, by filling in your missing pieces in practical ways

## Finding the Missing Pieces of the Love Puzzle

The following are common missing pieces, with their key characteristics. If you are not practicing these qualities in your life — in practical, everyday ways — you may be preventing yourself from having the love, success, and fulfillment that you want.

**Acceptance:** Doing what's best for me; taking care of myself; putting my needs first in healthy ways; saying no to whatever doesn't work for me; expressing my feelings and opinions; asking for what I want; allowing others to love and support me; and generally making myself #1 in my life.

**Trust:** Tuning in to my intuition; making choices/decisions based on what feels right for me; and following my heart so that I always stay on track.

**Authenticity:** Being my true self around others, without façade; not making compromises that conflict with my personal values; and expressing my feelings in meaningful, heartfelt ways. People often hide a part of themselves, fearing rejection, but it is the raw, vulnerable, authentic self that holds the greatest power to touch and transform another.

**Intimacy:** Sharing the deeper, emotional parts of myself; connecting with myself and others rather than using tactics to deflect closeness/affection; and daring to reveal the parts of me/my life that I may feel ashamed about. Nothing generates greater intimacy than the healing of deep wounds together.

**Self-expression:** Saying what I think, feel, or want; confronting challenging issues, rather than leaving important things unsaid; and expressing myself in creative ways.

**Validation/recognition:** Validating myself in positive ways, rather than criticizing myself or putting myself down; accepting compliments graciously; and being gentle with myself when I feel I've made a mistake.

**Respect:** Maintaining strong, healthy, personal boundaries; saying no to any form of abuse; respecting others' boundaries; and commanding respect from others by practising integrity.

**Safety:** Building internal safety by practicing self-acceptance and validation; not letting my fears run my life; and daring to be me, even when I fear rejection.



and seeing the pain for what it is — a lie that you believed about yourself simply because, back then, you had no other choice. But now you do. You may want to blame or lash out at your ex-husband, partner, or whoever has triggered the pain in you by not loving you the way you wanted to be loved, but the truth is that the pain comes from a false belief that became embedded in your subconscious, and only you can heal it. When you do, you will cease to attract drama and heartache in your relationships.

It's simple once you really get it. Relationships are designed to make you whole, taking you deeper into self-acceptance, love, intimacy, and fulfillment by triggering and clearing all the old programming that is in the way. That is their primary purpose. They are there for you to explore your true self and to develop your personal power, with your partner acting as a mirror and a sounding board for your growth. And they come to you in very specific packages, perfectly tailored to your needs of the moment.

So don't stop dating but do try playing by these new rules — if you want to create a loving, meaningful relationship. You can go on as before and confirm all that you ever believed to be true about relationships, by attracting the same old dynamics, or you can explore the possibility that you (and your subconscious) are responsible for what comes your way, and you can discover the amazing power you have to make magic happen. ■

*Olga Sheean is a relationship coach specializing in personal empowerment and holistic living. She works internationally, offering workshops, coaching and private/online consultations.*

*Her book, Fit for Love – Find your self and your perfect mate, is a practical guide to enlightened relationships, in the form of an illustrated workbook that couples or individuals can use to resolve their negative programming. The book is available at the author's website, [www.olgasheean.com](http://www.olgasheean.com) as well as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*



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